

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----231754Z 008608 /47
O 231440Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 134

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 7863

EXDIS

SECSTATE FOR HOLBROOKE

DEPARTMENT PASS IMMEDIATE TO NSC FOR ARMACOST FROM STULL

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MASS, MPOL
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS

1. MR. MICHAEL ARMACOST, NSC, SENIOR ADVISOR FOR ASIA, AND I MET MAY 23 WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS FOR ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS. AFTER PRELIMINARIES, I ASKED PRESIDENT MARCOS IF HE SHARED MY IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAD BEEN A CERTAIN PAUCITY OF PRIVATE INFORMAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, AS OPPOSED TO THE RATHER SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS AND SET PIECE EXCHANGES OF VIEWS. MARCOS DECIDEDLY AGREED WITH THIS SUGGESTION, POINTING OUT THAT HE HAD PROPOSED MORE BACK AND FORTH INFORMAL COMMUNICATIONS AS LONG AGO AS AMBASSADOR BYROADE'S TIME, AND MOST RECENTLY DURING THE VISIT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE. BUT THERE HAD BEEN DIFFICULTIES, E.G., PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES, MOSTLY CONCERNING MRS. MARCOS, THE BREAKDOWN OF THE KISSINGER/ROMULO TALKS, PRESS LEAKS, ETC.

2. I VENTURED THE OPINION THAT WE MIGHT EVEN ASK OURSELVES
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DO WE NEED NEGOTIATIONS AT ALL? MARCOS REPLIED THAT WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES WHAT WE REALLY DO WANT. ARMACOST INQUIRED IF HE WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS SUCH MATTERS WITH UNDERSECRETARY HABIB. MARCOS REPLIED, "WITH ANYONE IN A CONTINUING INFORMAL PRIVATE EXCHANGE WITHOUT THE PRESS, THAT'S IMPORTANT."

3. MARCOS SEEMED TO WANT TO ESTABLISH DEFINITION OF US COMMITMENTS UNDER THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY AS HIS MAJOR CONCERN. HOWEVER, AFTER REFERRING BACK TO THEN DCM WILSON'S UNSATISFACTORY DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION BEFORE THE SYMINGTON COMMITTEE, COMPLAINING ABOUT "THE ELEVATION TO THE MUTUAL DEFENSE BOARD" EARLIER THIS YEAR OF HIS "QUIET QUESTION" ON THE US COMMITMENT, AND STRIKING A GLANCING BLOW AT KISSINGER FOR AN UNSATISFACTORY FORMULATION ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS, MARCOS CAME DOWN RATHER DIRECTLY ON THE CORE ISSUE OF PAYMENT OF "RENT" FOR THE BASES.

4. RECALLING THE TIME DURING AMBASSADOR BYROADE'S TENURE WHEN, "WE HAD DIFFICULTY IN ARMING OUR MILITARY FORCES," MARCOS SAID HE PREVIOUSLY ALWAYS HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY, MILITARY BASES AGREEMENT AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WERE ALL PART OF ONE PACKAGE. NOW MILITARY ASSISTANCE APPARENTLY CAN BE CUT FOR EXTRANEIOUS REASONS, BUT UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS? ALL THIS HAS MOTIVATED THE GOP TO PREPARE A SELF-RELIANCE PACKAGE FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AND TO EMBRACE THE CONCEPT OF "RENT". ARMACOST EXPLAINED THE US POSITION ON "RENT" INCLUDING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR AN ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIP, AND THE JURISDICTIONAL COMPLICATIONS WITH CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES. MARCOS INDICATED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THESE AND A NUMBER OF RELATED TOPICS WITH KISSINGER WITHOUT RESULT, INDEED THE PHILIPPINES HAD BEEN ATTACKED PUBLICLY AS BLACKMAILERS DEMANDING "RENT", SO "WE BEGAN TO KEEP QUIET."

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5. HE SAID THAT RENT IS SEEN BY THE GOP AS THE MEANS TO MILITARY SELF-RELIANCE. SINCE THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY APPARENTLY DOES NOT COVER THE MASSIVE INFILTRATION OF ARMS (E.G., MINDANAO), THE GOP MUST PROVIDE FOR THAT FACT AND/OR CONTINGENCY. THE GOP WANTED THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY CLARIFIED FOR SUCH CONTINGENCIES. ARMACOST INTERJECTED THAT SUCH CLARIFICATION IS VERY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN IN THE GIVEN POLITICAL CONTEXT. MARCOS REPLIED THAT HE RELAIZED THIS, ADDING THAT IT WAS KISSINGER'S INSISTENCE THAT THE GOP SETTLE UPON A FIXED PRICE THAT COLLAPSED THE NEGOTIATIONS LAS NOVEMBER. I NOTED THAT "RENT" COULD TAKE MANY FORMS, CASH, HARDWARE OR FUNGIBLE ECONOMIC PROJECTS. MARCOS SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS.

6. MARCOS VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD AGREED WITH HOLBROOKE THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO DELAY FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS. BUT MEANWHILE, HE ALSO ARGUED, WE SHOULD BE DISCUSSING THE ISSUES AND REVIEWING AREAS OF PRIOR AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT. HE THEN TURNED TO ME AND WITH REFERENCE

TO A FRESH INCIDENT OF GUARD DOGS ALLEGEDLY ATTACKING
SCAVENGERS AT CLARK AIR BASE, SAID, "CAN'T YOU GET YOUR
PEOPLE OFF THAT PRACTICE? I KNOW THEY HAVE THEIR PROBLEMS,
BUT THIS INCIDENT IS GOING TO CAUSE ME A LOT OF TROUBLE.
PERHAPS WE CAN HELP YOU WITH CONTROL OF THE BASE PERI-
PHERY. THINGS ARE DIFFICULT ENOUGH WITHOUT INCIDENTS LIKE
THIS." I REPLIED WE CERTAINLY SHOULD BE ABLE TO WORK
TOGETHER TO IMPROVE, MODIFY AND CORRECT SUCH SITUATIONS.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 7863

EXDIS

SECSTATE FOR HOLBROOKE

DEPARTMENT PASS IMMEDIATE TO NSC FOR ARMACOST FROM STULL

WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FREEZE ALL IMPROVEMENTS PENDING
NEGOTIATIONS. INDEED, IF WE PROCEED PRAGMATICALLY WE
MIGHT EVEN FIND NO FORMAL NEW AGREEMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED.
MARCOS CONCLUDED, "IF WE CAN IMPROVE ON THE STRUCTURE OF
OUR RELATIONS PRAGMATICALLY AS YOU SUGGEST, I'M ALL FOR
IT. LET'S GO TO IT*"

7. MARCOS REFERRED BRIEFLY TO HIS JAPAN VISIT REPEATING
THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE US NOT RELY ON JAPAN AS
SPOKESMAN FOR OR TO ASIA. ARMACOST ASSURED HIM WE DID
NOT INTEND TO DO THAT. MARCOS THEN INVITED ARMACOST TO
COMMENT ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES FROM SALT, THROUGH VIETNAM
NEGOTIATIONS, TO THE STATUS OF TAIWAN, WHICH IS "OF
PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE PHILIPPINES." IN HIS COMMENTS
ON VIETNAM NEGOTIATIONS, ARMACOST TOOK THE OCCASION TO
UNDERLINE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE BY EMPAHSIZING THE DECIDED
ROLE IT PLAYED IN INHIBITING ANY AMERICAN DISPOSITION TO
ASSIST THE SRV. PRESIDENT MARCOS REQUESTED AND WAS

GIVEN A COPY OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH
AT NOTRE DAME.

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8. COMMENT: ARMACOST IS ENGROSSED ELSEWHERE AND HAS NOT
CLEARED THIS MESSAGE. BUT I BELIEVE IT IS FAIR TO SAY
THAT ARMACOST SHARES MY IMPRESSION (A) THAT MARCOS IS
INTERESTED IN IMPROVING HIS COMMUNICATION WITH THIS EMBASSY
AND THE USG IN GENERAL, (B) THAT HE IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER
A VARIETY OF FORMS AND LEVELS OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS,
(C) THAT HE IS NOT NOW PRESSING FOR FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS,
SPECIFICALLY ON THE MILITARY BASES, AND (D) THAT HE
APPEARED TO BE INTRIGUED WITH THE NOTION OF A MORE PRAG-
MATIC APPROACH TO RESOLVING ISSUES RELATING TO THE BASES,
IN THE ABSENCE, AND CONCEIVABLY EVEN IN LIEU OF,
NEGOTIATIONS FOR A FORMAL AGREEMENT.

9. I RECOGNIZE THAT THE ABOVE COULD LEAD TO SOME SUB-
STANTIAL REVISIONS IN OUR APPROACH TO THE MILITARY BASES
QUESTION. BUT I BELIEVE THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID FOR
EXPLORING ITS POSSIBILITIES, IN OUR OWN THINKING AND
CONCURRENTLY WITH MARCOS. WE MAY FIND THAT THE
ASSUMPTIONS UPON WHICH WE BASED OUR DECISION TO RENEGO-
TIATE ARE NO LONGER VALID, AND THAT THE INERTIA OF THOSE
THEN PROTRACTED AND NOW SUSPENDED NEGOTIATIONS NO LONGER
SERVES OUR BEST INTERESTS.

10. THE US HAS A MILITARY BASES AGREEMENT WITH THE
PHILIPPINES VALID UNTIL 1991, WHICH WORKS MOSTLY SATIS-
FACTORILY. THERE ARE PHILIPPINE DISSATISFACTIONS WITH
SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THAT AGREEMENT, SOME OF THEM FUNDAMEN-
TAL. BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS, DO WE NEED A NEW AGREEMENT,
WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES IN TERMS OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL,
FOR EXAMPLE? AND WILL MARCOS EVER SET HIS SIGNATURE TO
A NEW AGREEMENT, WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES FOR HIM IN TERMS
OF CERTIFYING THAT IT IS A "GOOD AGREEMENT" BEFORE HIS
DETRACTORS AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT? WHAT WE NEED
MOST, IT SEEMS TO ME, ARE MODIFICATIONS IN OUR MILITARY
BASE PRESENCE AND PRACTICES SUFFICIENT TO ALLAY PHILIPPINE
DISSATISFACTIONS, STRAINS AND FRICTIONS AT ALL LEVELS.

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ANY SUCH MODIFICATIONS SHOULD OF COURSE PERMIT OUR
CONTINUED EFFECTIVE ACCESS AND UTILIZATION OF THE BASES.
HOWEVER, OUR PRESENT PREOCCUPATION WITH FORMAL RENEGO-

TIATION SEEMS TO HAVE IMMOBILIZED US ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ALL CHANGES, EVEN THOSE IN OUR OWN DIRECT INTEREST, SUCH AS RETURNING MARGINAL REAL ESTATE, MUST BE WITHHELD FOR POSSIBLE BARGAINING USE IN THE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS, WHEN AND IF.

11. ACCORDINGLY, I RECOMMEND THAT WE HAVE ANOTHER LOOK AT OUR ASSUMPTIONS, INTERESTS, OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS. MEANWHILE, ON THE PHILIPPINE SIDE, WE SHOULD NOT MOVE TOO FAST. RATHER, I WOULD PROPOSE THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO FOLLOW UP WITH MARCOS ON OUR DISCUSSION TODAY, INFORMALLY AND NOMINALLY UNINSTRUCTED, TO EXPLORE FURTHER HIS GENERAL VIEWS ON CONCEPT AND PROCEDURE. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD BE INCLINED TO STEER AWAY FROM SUCH GRAND QUESTIONS AS INTERPRETATION OF MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY COMMITMENTS, WHICH IN ANY EVENT I CONSIDER TO BE MORE A LEVERAGE ARGUMENT TO SUPPORT THE PHILIPPINE POSITION ON "RENT." DEPENDING UPON MARCOS' REACTIONS, WE COULD THEN CONSIDER A NUMBER OF PRIVATE, INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE ISSUES MOST SUBJECT TO PRAGMATIC RESOLUTION.
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